number of passports issued and passport applications pending in Andhra Pradesh for 1996-97 is given below:

Name of the office-Passport Office, Hyderabad

Year	Passport issued	Total Pendency	Pendency over one month*
1996	1,76,649	30,156	12,265
1997 (upto 31.10.97)	1,96,710	28,331	5,496

*These figures exclude the applications which are pending for less than a month. These are awaiting processing for want of police reports.

It can be seen from the table given above, that, while the total number of Passports issued by Passport Office, Hyderabad, has gone up significantly, the number of applications pending for over one month has been brought down signficantly. Nevertheless, a number of steps have been taken to clear the backlog of passport applications in Andhra Pradesh. To decongest the existing Office at Hyderabad, a new Passport Office has been opened at Vishakhapatnam, a collection center is also proposed for Vijaywada. With the opening of the new Passport Office the processing time is expected to be reduced further, thus bringing down the pendency. Delay in receipt of police report and receipt of vague and incomplete reports is one of the main reasons for pendency. Close and regular coordination is therefore maintained with concerned police authorities for cases where backlog is accumulated due to incomplete and vague reports. In addition to this, reminders are regularly sent to applications to meet deficiencies in their passport application forms and to submit additional documents wherever required with a view to clearing backlog of this kind. Staff strength of the Passport Office in Hyderabad has also been augmented to clear pendency. The present computerisation facilities of the Passport Office, Hyderabad, are being upgraded to facilitate faster screening and processing of applications. The newly opened Passport Office in Vijaywada is also being computerised to reduce processing time.

All Passport Officers including the Passport Officer at Hyderabad have been instructed by the Ministry to meet public at designated hours on all working days, not only listen to grievances and complaints of the public, but also register any suggestions made by them. A complaint-cum-suggestion box is kept in each Passport Office.

Outbreak to Polio in Uttar Pradesh

*36. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the outbreak of Polio, which is taking an epidemic proportion in Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to control the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Increased incidence of polio cases has been reported this year from 30 districts of Uttar Pradesh.

(b) As part of National Surveillance System set up in reference to Polio Eradication Programme, independent surveillance team has been made operational for Uttar Pradesh in the current year. In places where Polio cases have been reported, immunization of surrounding population has been carried out by Government of Uttar Pradesh to control the infection. Stool samples of affected children have been tested in specialised laboratiries. Central officers and institutional teams have visited Uttar Pradesh to assist local administration. State has been advised to improve immunization coverage and to ensure prompt reporting of the cases.

Post Graduate courses by Dental Colleges in the Country

*37. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of Government and Private dental colleges in the country which have been permitted to start Post-Graduate courses and/or to enhance their BDS intake w.e.f. current academic session;

(b) whether permission has not yet been accorded to some of the applicant-colleges;